COPY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF A

GENERAL COURT MARTIAL,

HELD AT THE HORSE-GUARDS,

FOR THE TRIAL OF

COLONEL HUGH DEBBIEG,

OF THE CORPS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS;

ON THREE CHARGES,

EXHIBITED AGAINST HIM, BY

CHARLES, DUKE OF RICHMOND, &c.

MASTER GENERAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

COPIES of the OPENING of the CHARGES, and of the REPLY to the DEFENCE, as delivered by the DUKE of RICHMOND at the TRIAL; of which only short MINUTES were entered in the PROCEEDINGS of the COURT MARTIAL.

ALSO,

THE SENTENCE;

As directed, by His MAJESTY, to be issued in General Orders.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE Logographic Press.

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COPY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF A

GENERAL COURT MARTIAL,

HELD AT THE

HORSE-GUARDS,

ON FRIDAY, THE 26*th* OF JUNE, 1789,

AND CONTINUED BY ADJOURNMENT TO

MONDAY, THE 29*th* OF THE SAME MONTH

(COPY.)

AT A GENERAL COURT MARTIAL held at the HORSE GUARDS, on *Friday*, the 26th of *June*, 1789; and continued by Adjournment to *Monday*, the 29th of the ſame Month; by virtue of a Special Warrant from His MAJESTY, bearing Date the 24th Day of *June*, 1789.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHARLES, LORD SOUTHAMPTON, PRESIDENT.

Lieut. Gen. LANCELOT BAUGH.
Lieut. Gen. Sir DAVID LINDSAY, Bart.
Lieut. Gen. EDWARD MAXWELL BROWN.
Lieut. Gen. CHARLES RAINSFORD.
Major Gen. Hon. WILLIAM GORDON.
Major Gen. WEST HYDE.
Major Gen. JAMES WHORWOOD ADEANE.
Major Gen. GEORGE GARTH.
Major Gen. RICHARD GRENVILLE.
Major Gen. WYNTER BLATHWAYT.
Colonel GUSTAVUS GUYDICKENS.
Colonel GEORGE MORGAN.
Colonel JAMES MARSH.
Colonel MATHEW DIXON.
Colonel WILLIAM MARTIN.
Colonel EDMUND STEVENS.

Sir CHARLES GOULD, JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.

THE SEVERAL MEMBERS of the Court being duly ſworn, and the Judge Advocate alſo ſworn,

HUGH DEBBIEG, Eſq; one of the Colonels of the Corps of Royal Engineers, came Priſoner before the Court, and was arraigned upon the following Articles of Charge, as preferred againſt him by His Grace Charles Duke of Richmond, Lenox and Aubigny, Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance, *viz.*

FIRST. 'For writing to him (the ſaid 'Charles, Duke of Richmond, &c.) 'his commanding Officer, a Letter 'dated the 16th of March, 1789; 'containing diſreſpectful Expreſſions 'towards him, and Imputations of 'Ignorance, and Neglect of his Duty, 'as Maſter General of the Ordnance, 'to the Prejudice of good Order and 'military Diſcipline.

SECONDLY.

SECONDLY. 'For having cauſed to be 'publiſhed a Letter, purporting to 'be a Copy of a Letter addreſſed to 'His Grace the Duke of Richmond, 'Maſter General of His Majeſty's 'Ordnance, dated Mortimer-ſtreet, 'the 16th of March, 1789, and ſign-'ed Hugh Debbieg, which has a 'manifeſt Tendency to diſcredit him, 'his commanding Officer, and im-'putes to him a Syſtem, "only cal-"culated to invite the Enemy into "the very Boſom of Britain, where "he would ſoon neſtle himſelf, and "before we could have time to look "round us, accompliſh the Over-"throw of the State:" 'to the 'Prejudice of good Qrder and military 'Diſcipline.

THIRDLY. 'For that he, the ſaid Co-'lonel Debbieg, having been em-'ployed by Government in examin-

'ing the Defences of the Kingdom,
'has made public his Opinions on
'eſſential Parts thereof, by the ſaid
'Publication, contrary to his Duty
'as an Officer, and to the Prejudice
'of good Order and military Diſci-
'pline.'

IT WAS ADMITTED BY COLONEL DEBBIEG, that the Duke of Richmond, &c. is, and was at the Time of the Dates in Queſtion, Maſter General of the Ordnance, and, as ſuch, his commanding Officer; he, Colonel Debbieg, being one of the Colonels of the Corps of Royal Engineers, but unemployed.

CHARLES, DUKE OF RICHMOND, &c. Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance, having opened the Evidence, by which he propoſed to ſubſtantiate the ſaid Charges, produced to the Court a Letter, ſigned "Hugh Debbieg," and dated Mortimer-

timer-ſtreet, 16th March, 1789,—which Colonel Debbieg admitted to have been written by him on the Day of the Date thereof,—and addreſſed to His Grace the Duke of Richmond, Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance; which was read, as follows, viz.

"*To His Grace the Duke of Richmond,*
"*Maſter General of his Majeſty's*
"*Ordnance:*

"My Lord Duke,

"YOUR rejecting my "Aſſiſtance at the Board of Sea and Land "Officers, appointed by your Grace, un- "der the Vote of the Houſe of Commons, "to conſider the State of the Defences of "the Kingdom, although I was expreſſly "nominated in that honourable Houſe, "and included in that Vote, to make one

"*at*

" *at that Board*, was a Declaration to me
" at once inauſpicious and hoſtile in the
" Extreme. I had formed (having Autho-
" rity to do ſo) Opinions upon the Sub-
" ject of the Defences of the Country,
" before your Grace came firſt into the
" Ordnance; and, at the Time when
" your Mind was employed upon pro-
" viding for a ſecondary Object, the Secu-
" rity of the Dock-yards, ſimply as ſuch,
" mine SOARED to thoſe ſame Objects of
" Defence, as connected and combined with
" thoſe of the Empire, the Proſperity of
" her Marine, and of her Commerce; all,
" at preſent, ſo imminently threatened
" with Miſchiefs, Impediments, and Diffi-
" culties, unfelt by this Nation heretofore,
" from the indefatigable, and, but too
" ſucceſsful Efforts of our active, war-
" like, and inſidious Neighbour. In the
" Height of your Zeal for erecting mili-
" tary Works, like the Architect, who
built

" built an elegant Town-hall, and left no
" Room for a Stair-caſe to aſcend to it;
" ſo your Grace, wiſhing to give extraor-
" dinary Attention to preſerve the Stores
" for equipping our Fleet, forgot that *that*
" *Fleet* ſtill wanted a fortified Harbour.
" Great Britain poſſeſſeth but one; and,
" upon *the indefeaſible hold thereof* depends
" her principal Strength, Power, and Re-
" ſources; upon the Security of which,
" with the honeſt, indignant Feelings of
" an Engliſhman, it is with great Pain I
" muſt obſerve your Grace hath not be-
" ſtowed due Reflection and Attention;
" nor upon the fatal Conſequences that
" will moſt ſurely reſult from the Neg-
" lect of it. Your Syſtem appears to
" me only calculated to invite the Ene-
" my into the very Boſom of Britain,
" where he would ſoon neſtle himſelf, and,
" before we could have Time to look round

" us,

" us, accompliſh the OVERTHROW OF THE
" STATE.

" Such, my Lord, are my gene-
" ral Sentiments reſpecting your Care for
" the Safety of the Dock-yards: I com-
" municated them early to a Friend of
" Mr. Pitt: that Friend urged me to ſtate
" them in Writing; I did ſo: and, on the
" the 20th October, 1786, they were put
" into Mr. Pitt's Poſſeſſion. I alſo deli-
" vered an improved, and better digeſted
" Copy of the ſame, with additional Notes
" and explanatory Obſervations, on the 10th
" September laſt, at the Queen's Houſe,
" for His Majeſty; and I have two Copies
" of the latter in my own Poſſeſſion.

" It has been the Spirit of your Admi-
" niſtration to puniſh me by the Laws of
" my Country: I now offer myſelf for a
" ſecond Trial, by which I hope to wipe
" away

" away the Stain, if any remains upon
" me, of the firſt. Call forth, then, I
" beſeech you, my Lord, your Magnani-
" mity; be noble, and let a Board of
" Sea and Land Officers ſit, and report
" upon my general Principles, as they did
" upon your Plans: Be generous, and
" give me an Opportunity of ſatisfying my
" King and my Country, what Sort of
" Man he is whom you have ſo publicly,
" and ſo unmeritedly driven from your
" Councils, and fruſtrated his honeſt En-
" deavours to ſerve the State, as if his
" Services and Experience were in no Eſti-
" mation. By this Act of your Juſtice,
" you will bind me by the greateſt of all
" Favours in your Power to beſtow.—
" I have no Objection that your Grace
" ſhall be Preſident of this Board, as you
" was of your own; provided I may be
" regularly ſummoned as a Member there-
" of, with a Privilege of voting, and wit-

" neſſing by my Signature, all Proceedings
" held thereon, in the moſt open, full and
" ample Manner; to which I conceive
" myſelf entitled by the Rank I hold;
" the various Services I have ſeen; and
" the Experience I have acquired, during
" Forty-three Years.

" I have the Honour to be,

" My Lord Duke,

" Your Grace's moſt obedient,

" And moſt humble Servant,

" HUGH DEBBIEG."

" Mortimer-Street,
" 16th *March*, 1789."

THE

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND then produced a printed Newſpaper, entitled, the Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiſer, of Wedneſday, June 3d, 1789; in which was inſerted a Letter, purporting to be a Copy, of correſpondent Date, Addreſs and Signature, with the Letter now read;—which Colonel Debbieg alſo admitted to have been publiſhed by his Direction, and to be of the ſame Subſtance with the ſaid recited Letter; and the ſame was thereupon laid upon the Table, and found to differ, here and there, in ſome few Words, not very material, nor affecting the general Import of the Letter; as will appear from the Tranſcript, here ſubjoined, of the ſaid printed Copy. *viz.*

(COPY.)

(COPY.)

"*To His Grace the Duke of Richmond,*
"*&c. Maſter General of His Ma-*
"*jeſty's Ordnance.*

"My Lord Duke,

"YOUR rejecting my
"Aſſiſtance at the Board of Sea and Land
"Officers, appointed by your Grace under
"the Vote of the Houſe of Commons, to
"conſider the State of the Defences of the
"Kingdom, although I was expreſsly no-
"minated in that Hon. Houſe, and in-
"cluded in that Vote to make one at *that*
"*Board*, was a Declaration to me at once
"inauſpicious and hoſtile in the extreme:
"I had formed, having Authority to do
"ſo, Opinions upon the Subject of the
"Defences of the Country, long before
"your Grace came firſt into the Ordnance:
"and at the Time that your Mind was
"employed

" employed upon providing for a ſecondary
" Object, the Security of the Dock Yards,
" ſimply as ſuch, mine ſoared to the ſame
" Objects of Defence, as connected and
" combined with thoſe of the Empire,
" the Proſperity of her Marine, and of her
" Commerce, all at preſent ſo imminently
" threatened with Miſchiefs, Impediments,
" and Difficulties, unfelt by this Nation
" heretofore, *from the indefatigable, and, but*
" *too ſucceſsful Efforts of our active, warlike,*
" *and inſidious Neighbour.* In the Height
" of your Zeal for erecting military Works,
" like the Architect who built an elegant
" Town-Hall, and forgot a Stair-caſe, to
" aſcend to it, your Grace, wiſhing to give
" extraordinary Attention to preſerve the
" Stores for equipping our Fleet, forgot
" that *that Fleet* wanted a fortified Har-
" bour. Great Britain poſſeſſeth but one,
" and upon *the indefeaſible hold thereof* de-
" pends her principal Strength, Power,

" and Reſources; upon the Security of
" which, with the honeſt, indignant Feel-
" ings of an Engliſhman, it is with great
" Pain I muſt obſerve, your Grace hath
" not beſtowed due Reflection and Atten-
" tion, nor upon the fatal Conſequences
" that will moſt ſurely reſult from the
" Neglect of it. Your Syſtem appears to
" me, only calculated *to invite the Enemy*
" *into the very Boſom of Britain, where he*
" *would ſoon neſtle himſelf, and before we*
" *could have Time to look round us, accom-*
" *pliſh* the Overthrow of the State. Such,
" my Lord, are my general Sentiments
" reſpecting your Care for the *Safety of the*
" Dock Yards. I communicated them
" early to a Friend of Mr. Pitt; that
" Friend urged me to ſtate them in Wri-
" ting; I did ſo: and on the 20th of Octo-
" ber, 1786, they were put into Mr.
" Pitt's Poſſeſſion.—I alſo delivered an
" improved, and better digeſted Copy of

" the

" the ſame, with additional Notes and
" explanatory Obſervations, on the 20th
" of September laſt, at the Queen's Houſe,
" for His Majeſty; and I have two Copies
" of the latter in my Poſſeſſion.

" It has been the Spirit of your Admini-
" ſtration to puniſh me by the Laws of my
" Country: I now offer myſelf for a ſecond
" Trial, by which I hope to wipe away
" the Stain, if any remains upon me, of
" the firſt. Call forth then, I beſeech
" you, my Lord, your Magnanimity; be
" noble, and let a Board of Sea and Land
" Officers ſit and report upon my gene-
" ral Principles, as they did upon your
" Plans;—be generous, and give me an
" Opportunity of ſatisfying my King and
" my Country, what Sort of a Man he is,
" whom you have ſo publicly and unme-
" ritedly driven from your Councils, and
" fruſtrated his honeſt Endeavours to ſerve

" the State, as if his Services and Expe-
" rience were in no Eſtimation. By this
" Act of open Juſtice, you will bind me
" by the greateſt of all Favours in your
" Power to beſtow.

" I have no Objection that your Grace
" ſhall be Preſident of this Board, as you
" was of your own; provided I may be
" regularly ſummoned as a Member there-
" of, with a Privilege of voting and wit-
" neſſing, by my Signature, all Proceed-
" ings held thereon, in the moſt full and
" ample Manner; to which I conceive
" myſelf fully entitled by the Rank I
" hold, the various Services I have ſeen,
" and the Experience I have acquired du-
" ring Forty-three Years.

" I have the Honour to be,

" My Lord Duke,

" Your Grace's moſt obedient,

" And moſt humble Servant,

(Signed) "HUGH DEBBIEG."

" Mortimer-Street,
" 16*th March*, 1789."

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND, alſo tendered to the Court a Copy of a Letter, alleged to have been written by his Grace to Colonel Debbieg, upon the Occaſion of this Publication, together with Colonel Debbieg's Anſwer; and alſo a ſecond Letter written to Colonel Debbieg, with the Colonel's Reply thereto, which Correſpondence, Colonel Debbieg admitted to be genuine; and the ſame were read, as follow:—

[Nº. I.]

A Letter from the Duke of Richmond, to Colonel Debbieg.

"WHITEHALL, *4th June*, 1789.

" SIR,

" HAVING ſeen in the " Public Advertiſer of this Day, a Copy

" of a Letter addreſſed to me, as Maſter " General of His Majeſty's Ordnance, " with your Signature; I deſire to know " whether its Publication has been by your " Directions, or with your Conſent or " Knowledge.

" I am, SIR,

" Your moſt obedient,

" Humble Servant,

" RICHMOND, &c.

" MASTER GENERAL OF HIS " MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE."

" *Colonel Debbieg.*"

[N°.

[N°. II.]

A Letter from Colonel Debbieg, to the Duke of Richmond.

"MORTIMER-STREET, *4th June*, 1789.

"MY LORD DUKE,

"IN return to the Honour "of your Grace's Letter, received almoſt "this Moment, I have only to aſſure your "Grace, that no Letter of mine, to you, "was inſerted by my Directions, or with "my Conſent or Knowledge, in the Public "Advertiſer of this Day.

"I have the honour to be, with great Reſpect,

"MY LORD DUKE,

"Your Grace's moſt obedient,

"And moſt humble Servant,

"HUGH DEBBIEG."

"*To His Grace the Duke of Richmond,*
"*Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance.*"

[N°. III.]

A Letter from the Duke of Richmond, to Colonel Debbieg.

" WHITEHALL, 6*th June*, 1789.

" SIR,

" AS your Letter of " the 4th Inſtant, informed me that no " Letter of your's, to me, was inſerted " by your Directions, or with your Con- " ſent or Knowledge, in the Public Ad- " vertiſer of that Day, I ſent to the Prin- " ter of the Public Advertiſer, to know " from whom he had received the Letter " he had publiſhed, and found he had only " copied it from the Gazetteer of the pre- " ceding Day. Upon ſending to the Per-

" ſon

" ſon who has the Management of that
" Paper, I underſtand, he received the
" Letter in Manuſcript, from Mr. Debrett.

" As my Requeſt to you, concerning
" your Letter, was in general Terms,
" with reſpect to its Publication, I am per-
" ſuaded that your Anſwer meant to con-
" vey, generally, that you was not in any
" Way privy to it. However, to prevent
" Miſtakes, I wiſh to be informed whether
" I am, or am not right in this Perſuaſion;
" as from the preciſe wording of your An-
" ſwer to me, it might be conſidered as
" confining your Knowledge of the Pub-
" lication of your Letter, of the 16th of
" March laſt, to the particular Paper of
" the Public Advertiſer, of the 4th of
" June, in which I had ſeen it; and I am
" further to deſire, you will inform me
" whether you have given any Copy of
" the Letter, which has been publiſhed,

" to

" to Mr. Debrett, or have any Knowledge
" by what Means it came into his Hands.

" I am, SIR,

" Your moſt obedient,

" Humble Servant,

" RICHMOND, &c.

" MASTER GENERAL OF HIS
" MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE."

" *Colonel Debbieg.*"

[N°. IV.]

A Letter from Colonel Debbieg to the Duke of Richmond.

" MORTIMER-STREET, 6th *June*, 1789.

" MY LORD DUKE,

" IN Anſwer to your Grace's
" Letter of this Day's Date, I have only to
" expreſs my Surprize that you ſhould call
" upon

" upon me for any further Explanation " reſpecting the Publication of a Letter, " dated the 16th *March* laſt, of which you " have never condeſcended to acknowledge " the Receipt.

" I have the Honour of being,

" My Lord Duke,

" Your Grace's moſt obedient,

" Humble Servant,

" HUGH DEBBIEG."

" *To His Grace the Duke of Richmond,*
" *Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance.*"

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND alſo offered to the Conſideration of the Court, ſome Remarks or Comments upon the Evidence laid before them, tending to elucidate the ſame; and to ſhew, that the Charges,

which he had thought it his Duty to prefer againſt Colonel Debbieg, are fully warranted, by a plain and obvious Conſtruction of the Letter in Queſtion, and by the ſubſequent Publication thereof;—and His Grace took Occaſion to obſerve, that, at firſt, when he received this Letter, written to him by Colonel Debbieg, he had determined to paſs the ſame by unnoticed; conceiving that a total Silence, and Diſregard of the Attack, could not but be ſtrongly felt by the Writer of the Letter, at the ſame Time that it was, in Truth, lenient towards Colonel Debbieg, who, all Circumſtances conſidered, appeared to him to have thereby laid himſelf open to very ſerious Conſequences; — but, when his Grace, after a Period of more than two Months, which afforded Opportunity for Reflection and Deliberation, ſaw the Letter printed, and held out to the public Eye in a Newſpaper; and diſcovered, upon Enquiry, that

ſuch

ſuch Publication was made by Colonel Debbieg's Direction, he then thought it due to his own Character, and indiſpenſably neceſſary, for the Sake of Example, and of ſupporting Diſcipline in the Army, to make Repreſentation of ſuch Miſconduct to His Majeſty; and to pray, that the Charges, which are now pending, might be ſubmitted to the Judgment of a General Court Martial.

THE PROSECUTION being cloſed, Colonel Debbieg was told, it was now Time to make his Defence; who urgently preſſed that convenient Time might be allowed him, before he entered upon the ſame; — alleging, that he had not yet made any Arrangement thereof, as he had waited until he ſhould ſee, in one View, the whole Scope of what ſhould be urged againſt him.

THE COURT having taken the Requeſt into Conſideration, agreed, as Matter of ſpecial Indulgence,—and the Duke of Richmond, the Proſecutor, not having any Objection thereto, to allow Colonel Debbieg till Monday Morning next, when he will come fully prepared; and then

ADJOURNED till Monday Morning next, at Ten o'Clock.

MONDAY,

MONDAY, 29th JUNE, 1789.

THE COURT met, pursuant to Adjournment, consisting of the same Members as at their last Sitting; when

COLONEL DEBBIEG opened his Defence in Manner following:

'*My* LORD, *and* GENTLEMEN
'*of this Honourable* COURT MARTIAL.

'I AM brought before you 'upon three distinct Charges by the Duke 'of Richmond.

'FIRST. For writing to him, my com-'manding Officer, a Letter, dated the '16th March, 1789, containing disre-'spectful Expressions towards him, and 'Imputations of Ignorance and Neglect

'of

'of his Duty, as Maſter General of the 'Ordnance; to the Prejudice of good 'Order, and military Diſcipline.

'SECONDLY. For having cauſed to be pub-'liſhed a Letter, purporting to be a 'Copy of a Letter addreſſed to His 'Grace the Duke of Richmond, Maſ-'ter General of His Majeſty's Ord-'nance, dated Mortimer-ſtreet, the '16th March, 1789, and ſigned Hugh 'Debbieg, which has a manifeſt Ten-'dency to diſcredit him, his com-'manding Officer; and imputes to 'him a Syſtem, "only calculated to in-"vite the Enemy into the very Boſom "of Britain, where he would ſoon neſ-"tle himſelf; and, before we could "have Time to look round us, ac-"compliſh the Overthrow of the "State;" 'to the Prejudice of good 'Order, and military Diſcipline.

'THIRDLY.

'THIRDLY. For that he, the ſaid Colonel 'Debbieg, having been employed by 'Government in examining the De- 'fences of the Kingdom, has made 'public his Opinions on eſſential Parts 'thereof, by the ſaid Publication, con- 'trary to his Duty as an Officer, and 'to the Prejudice of good Order and 'military Diſcipline.'

'Theſe different Charges are founded 'upon a Letter, written by me to the 'Duke of Richmond, dated the 16th 'March, 1789, and ſince publiſhed.

'Having at once admitted both the wri- 'ting and publiſhing, it only remains for 'me, briefly to ſtate ſuch Circumſtances 'as will induce this Honourable Court to 'view this Tranſaction in the Light in 'which it ought to ſtand.

'As my Proſecutor has, in his Addreſs
'to this Court, abandoned the laſt Charge,
'I might ſafely paſs it over in Silence:—
'But it has been *publicly preferred*; and it
'has, in its *Nature*, ſunk deep in my
'Mind: I muſt, therefore, take the liberty
'of ſtating the Defence of it, and expreſs-
'ing the Senſations it has excited in me.—
'It is a Crime againſt the State, equally
'applicable to a Citizen as a Soldier; *a*
'*Crime*, of which I feel conſcious Inno-
'cence; and I confidently reſt the Proof
'*of that Innocence* on the uniform Tenor
'of a long Life, dedicated to the Service of
'my Country; *and* which even the *very*
'*Motives* that urged me to the Act which
'brings me before this Court, *afford an ample*
'*Contradiction to.*

'*The Letter* is before the Court; and I
'truſt to their Accuracy and Candour in
'conſidering it, and reſt ſatisfied with aſ-
'ſerting,

'ſerting, that from Beginning to End, there 'does not appear a Word, or a Phraſe, 'which can convey to Friend or Foe, an 'Opinion, tending to diſcloſe, either in 'eſſential Parts, or in thoſe that are leſs 'eſſential, the Weakneſs of the Country.— 'The Letter was intended, by mere general 'Alluſions, to call forth the Attention of 'my Proſecutor, to what I deem eſſential 'to the Public Safety; and if it did *not* call 'forth his Attention, to call forth *that of 'the Public*, to the Situation of the Country. 'But it was my Intention to do this by 'general Expreſſions, without expoſing 'the Weakneſs which it meant to remove.

'Men whoſe military Inveſtigations have 'led them to the Conſideration of this par- 'ticular Subject, *may* diſcover to what I 'alluded; but even ſuch Perſons, without 'having peruſed the detailed Work, to 'which the Letter refers (and which I have

'anxiouſly concealed from the Public Ob-
'ſervation) could *not* diſcover the Mode of
'executing my Plan; nor could the Enemy
'receive the moſt diſtant Hint of our Weak-
'neſs, provided that Weakneſs is even per-
'mitted to continue.—There was enough
'ſaid, to ſhew the Maſter General of the
'Ordnance *how* he might correct the Miſ-
'takes made in his Mode of defending the
'Country; but there is not a Sentence or a
'Word, that could lead to a general Diſ-
'covery of that Weakneſs.———There is
'enough to alarm, that there is a Weak-
'neſs ſomewhere; but there is not an
'Expreſſion which can diſcloſe to an Ene-
'my, *how* they can avail themſelves of
'that Weakneſs.

'My Lord and Gentlemen of this Ho-
'nourable Court Martial, my Merits, if I
'can boaſt of any,—the Pretenſions, the
'Honours of my Life, ſpring from State

Truſt:

'Truſt: Were I not precluded by the Duty
'of Secrecy, from revealing the Services
'to which I allude, the Nature of them
'would *beſt refute* ſuch Accuſations.

'It has been my Lot to poſſeſs Secrets,
'not of our own Weakneſſes, but of our
'Enemies; Secrets *of a Price*, that, in the
'Computation of a Traitor, might have
'outweighed the Infamy of a Diſcovery.—
'Has Suſpicion ever breathed againſt me?—
'Differing with the Noble Duke as I have
'done, in material and important Points of
'military Syſtem, I might have expected
'his Diſfavour, and the Preference of my
'Juniors in Employment and Emolument;
'I might have *foreſeen* that my Zeal would be
'importunate, and my Sincerity offenſive;
'but from him, who knew the Diſappoint-
'ments I had borne at Home, and could
'hardly be a Stranger to what I might
'aſpire to Abroad;—from him, ſo well able

' to judge of my Integrity by my Patience,
' *the Charge of Infidelity to the State*, was
' the laſt, as well as the moſt opprobrious,
' I could have looked to: It is a Surpriſe
' upon the *Mind* that Innocence itſelf can-
' not guard againſt, and it ſtrikes to the
' Heart.

' How far it was juſtifiable to write
' originally to my Proſecutor, *and then*, to
' make what I had written public to the
' World, is the next Conſideration.

' It is according to the Opinion which
' you, my Judges, form of that Part of my
' Conduct, that you will give your Judg-
' ment on the two firſt Articles of Charge:
' As to the ſimple *writing* the Letter, I
' truſt there is nothing inconſiſtent with
' military Subordination or Duty, which
' prevents an inferior Officer from repre-
' ſenting, manfully and firmly, to his Supe-
' rior,

'rior, his Opinions reſpecting Matters of 'national Importance and Safety. Upon 'the Fact of *writing* the Letter, and car-'rying it to the Duke of Richmond, I 'truſt I am under no Neceſſity to detain 'this Honourable Court.

'With reſpect to making that Letter 'public, it may be neceſſary to ſpeak more 'at Large.— I do not mean, in the moſt 'diſtant Degree, to inſinuate that I am not, 'as an Officer, *amenable* to this Court for 'any Thing I have ſaid, written, or pub-'liſhed, reſpecting the Maſter General of 'the Ordnance; but I may nevertheleſs ob-'ſerve, as an Aid to the Judgment of the 'Court, that although commiſſioned and 'in pay as an Officer, I am, at preſent, *in* 'no military Employment; I am not imme-'diately ſerving under the Command of 'the Maſter General of the Ordnance, but 'only connected with him generally as

'*Superior and Inferior*.—Like other Officers 'unemployed in Time of Peace, my Ac- 'tions ought rather to be conſidered, like 'thoſe of any other Citizen, intitled to de- 'liver Opinions of *Men and Things*, than 'like thoſe of an Officer reſponſible for any 'Breach of a particular military Duty.

'Long before the Duke of Richmond 'preſided over the Ordnance Department, I 'had frequently been called upon by Mini- 'ſters (without the Participation or Know- 'ledge of the Maſter General of the Ord- 'nance) to communicate with them on 'the Subjects of Home Defence and Fo- 'reign Attack. In thoſe Situations I had 'been accuſtomed to communicate freely; 'and my Communications, though never re- 'warded to the Extent of the Promiſes made 'to me, had been candidly and fairly received: '—I was led by thoſe Requeſts, and from 'a Zeal to ſerve my Country, to become, at

'Times,

'Times, a Volunteer in the Service, and to 'offer Information when it had not been 'called for.

'Habituated to this Mode of Communi- 'cation, and eagerly deſirous to promote 'the Good of my Country, I had ſubmit- 'ted to His Majeſty's Firſt Lord of the 'Treaſury, a Syſtem, or rather the firſt 'Principles of a Syſtem of Fortification, 'which ſeemed to me of the utmoſt Con- 'ſequence, both for the Defence of this 'Country, conſidered abſtractedly, and 'ſtill more for its Defence, when conſi- 'dered with relation to the Operations of 'our active and warlike Neighbour.

'Theſe Repreſentations lay before the 'Miniſter fifteen Months unnoticed and 'unanſwered;—yet this Treatment did 'not abate my Zeal; and I requeſted leave, 'through the Miniſter, to lay them at my

'Sovereign's Feet:—This Propoſal was 'equally neglected and overlooked.

'Under the Impreſſions of this Neglect, 'and the Anxiety I felt to promote the Pub-'lic Service, by furthering a Syſtem which 'had received my fulleſt Conſideration, 'and was *rivetted* in my Conviction, as the 'only *ſolid Plan of our national Safety*, I 'determined to run any Riſk, rather than 'let it periſh in Obſcurity.—I therefore 'wrote the Letter of the 16th of March, '1789, addreſſed to the Duke of Rich-'mond; imagining, that by ſtrongly at-'tacking his Grace's Syſtem, and eagerly 'ſuſtaining the Mode propoſed by me, I 'might either excite him to adopt my 'Plan, or muſt have reduced him to the 'Neceſſity of granting me a Board of Sea 'and Land Officers, whoſe Examination 'and Report, would produce the Effect I ſo 'ardently wiſhed,—for the Safety of my 'Country.—

' Country.—I waited ten Weeks, but re-
' ceived no Anſwer, and heard of no Board
' being named; I imagined, raſhly perhaps,
' for my own Eaſe and Quiet, but not
' criminally I truſt, that what would *not*
' *operate* when confined to the Repoſitories
' of the Noble Duke, might *have* its ef-
' fect when expoſed *to public View*:—That
' the Letter being made *public*, might excite
' His Grace, through the Medium of
' *public* Obſervation, either to *grant* my Re-
' queſt of a Board, ſuch as I aſked, or might
' produce public Attention *from other Quar-*
' *ters*; *and*, by that Means, promote the
' End of *public Safety*, ſo ardently and un-
' remittingly purſued by me.

' I did not imagine that the Reſult would
' be a *Trial* for the Crimes with which I
' now ſtand charged, without the *poſſibility*

of

'*of laying my Juſtification*, as grounded in 'my Plans of Defence, before the Court.

'In this Situation I am compelled to 'make a Propoſition to this Honourable 'Court, which I hope will meet their Ap-'probation.—The evil Effects of it, can 'only operate to my Prejudice; the good 'Effects of it, whatever they may be, will 'redound to my Country; and it can form 'no Precedent *prejudicial to thoſe* who may 'hereafter be the Object of military Juriſ-'diction.

'The Plan or Syſtem of Defence which 'excited me to publiſh the Letter which 'is the Ground of the Charges againſt me, 'has been written *out by me* at Length, and 'detailed in all its Particulars: One I con-'veyed to the Firſt Lord of the Treaſury; 'another I laid at the Feet of my Sovereign; 'two remain in my own Poſſeſſion.

'One

'One of these I wish to produce in Evi-
'dence before you; confident that when it
'is considered by Persons of your profes-
'sional Knowledge and unbiassed Judg-
'ments, it will appear *so fraught* with
'public Good, as to justify Attempts still
'more irregular than *mine have been*, to force
'it on the Notice of Men in public Sta-
'tions.—My Prosecutor has told you, that
"my Plan might have been brought for-
"ward in Parliament;" 'yet he has ac-
'cused me of unfolding the Country's
'Weakness: Were *I* to have brought it
'forward in Parliament, I should have
'been guilty of the Charge, *which I*
'*deny*.

'*I know the Plan*; and I know that it
'*cannot* be the Subject of public Discussion,
'without exposing the Weakness of the
'Country:—Here is my Dilemma:—I
'have anxiously considered how I should
'be

' be relieved from it. There ſeems to me
' but one Way; that I am ready to adopt.
' You, my *Judges*, cannot require of me
' to wave *my* Rights;—but I *may* wave
' them for *myſelf*. I am entitled, like every
' Subject of this free Country, to be tried
' in an open Court: This Privilege I am
' willing to abandon, for the Sake of ren-
' dering that Evidence admiſſible, which,
' from its Nature, cannot be made public.
' I tender you, therefore, my Lord and
' Gentlemen of this Honourable Court
' Martial, *my Plan, ſealed up*; and I am
' willing to be tried by your *private* Exa-
' mination of it: aided by ſuch Obſerva-
' tions as you may think it proper to call
' upon me to make, to clear up what may
' be obſcure or doubtful; and, with the
' Expectation that you will permit ſuch
' *Facts* to be *given in Evidence*, in the ſame
' ſecret Manner, as may tend to eſtabliſh

' the

' the Principles laid down by me in my
' Plan.

' If, upon conſidering this Paper, you
' ſhall be of Opinion that it is interwoven
' with the national Safety, you will par-
' don, I am ſure, the Mode which I have
' taken to bring it into public Notice.—
' You will recollect that I have been
' thwarted in every private and regular At-
' tempt to inſure its Execution; and that
' to a *Mind anxious for the public Proſperity*,
' an Act tending to that End, was, at leaſt
' juſtifiable. If, notwithſtanding the Ex-
' citement I felt, thus to bring the Subject
' forward, I ſhall be deemed guilty of any
' Offence, I will chearfully ſubmit to the
' Judgment *you* may think it proper to pro-
' nounce; and ſhall conceive that I fall, as on
' the Top of a Breach, expoſing my own per-
' ſonal Comfort and Safety in the Defence
' of my Country; and, I hope I ſhall be

' pardoned

'pardoned if I add, that I ſhall bear your 'Sentence with additional Chearfulneſs, 'becauſe I am confident that, through the 'Medium of your Inveſtigation of this 'great and important Plan of national De-'fence, I ſhall ſee *that Syſtem adopted*, 'which I have, hitherto, in vain attempted 'to impreſs upon the Minds of thoſe who 'have the Power to execute it; and that, 'while the Individual ſuffers, THE COUN-'TRY WILL BE SAVED.

'HUGH DEBBIEG.'

THE COURT MARTIAL having taken into Conſideration the Requeſt made to them by Colonel Debbieg, came to the following Reſolution, which was declared to him by the Judge Advocate: *viz.*

THE COURT are clearly of Opinion that it would be highly improper for them,

nor

nor do they feel themſelves competent to enter upon the Conſideration of any general Plan for the Defence of the Kingdom, which Colonel Debbieg may be deſirous of laying before them; not only in Regard that the ſame is not referred to them by His Majeſty, but alſo as it would be extremely irregular to decide upon, or to receive any Evidence, which cannot, or ought not, to be made public.

And the Court have further to obſerve, that the real Merits of, or Defects in this Plan, would not, as they conceive, have any Weight in determining upon the Queſtion now before them.—They are willing to give Colonel Debbieg full Credit for his having projected a Plan, in his own Perſuaſion, of great public Utility; which Perſuaſion alone, and not the actual intrinſic Merits of the Plan, nor the Eſtimation thereof by other profeſſional Men, muſt

have operated upon his Judgment, and influenced his Conduct.

COLONEL DEBBIEG then acquainted the Court, that, ſuch being the Determination of the Court, he would not trouble them with the Examination of any Witneſſes, but would reſt his Caſe upon the Remarks which he had already ſubmitted to them.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND, in REPLY, explained, That he had by no Means abandoned the THIRD Article of Charge, as Colonel Debbieg ſeems erroneouſly to have conceived;—that he had originally conſidered and ſtill conſiders Colonel Debbieg's Diſcloſure (by the Publication of the Letter) of his own Opinion reſpecting the weak Part of the Defence of the Kingdom, to be a Breach of his Duty, as an Officer,

and did ſo ſtate it in the Opening of the Charge,— that the Imputation of which he acquitted Colonel Debbieg, was that of having made this Diſcloſure with any bad *Intentions* towards his Country ;— and in Anſwer to Colonel Debbieg's Remark, that the Paragraph of the Letter, to which this Article of Charge points, is conceived in general Terms only, and ſuch as could not convey any eſſential or material Information to an Enemy, the Duke obſerved, that the Mention of the Want of a Fortified Harbour, ſufficiently indicated wherein the Weakneſs of the national, Defence according to Colonel Debbieg's Apprehenſion, conſiſted.

The Duke alſo took Notice, that Colonel Debbieg has ſpoken of Diſappointments, which he had ſuſtained, and of a Preference in Employ and Emoluments given to Junior Officers; and in Anſwer, his

Grace remarked, that Colonel Debbieg had not pointed out any Inſtance, nor did he (the Duke) recollect any, of a Junior having been promoted over his Head; and as to his not having been employed, the Duke added, that no Officer has, in his Opinion, a Right to complain of ill Uſage, becauſe his Superior, without Reaſon aſſigned, does not think fit to employ him.

With Reſpect to the FIRST Article of the Charge, the Duke obſerved, that he had not found fault with Colonel Debbieg's having in a Letter to him, his commanding Officer, ſet forth his Sentiments upon the Subject of the Defence of the Country;—It was the Style uſed therein by Colonel Debbieg, of which he had complained.

To the Argument urged by Colonel Debbieg, of his having been in the Habit of being adviſed with, or conſulted by Miniſters,

ſters, without the Intervention of the Maſter General of the Ordnance, the Duke took this Diſtinction, that, in the preſent Inſtance, Colonel Debbieg had, of his own Accord, and without waiting to be conſulted, offered a Plan to the Miniſter, who, for Reaſons of his own, had not thought fit to adopt it, or bring it forward; and as the ſame had not been communicated in the regular Channel, through the Maſter General, or the Board of Ordnance, or the Chief Engineer, Colonel Debbieg had no reaſon to complain that the Maſter General had not promoted it; nor does he (the Duke) think that the Plan not having been purſued or embraced, warranted Colonel Debbieg in making an Appeal to the Public.

UPON due Conſideration of the whole Matter, (the Senſe of each Member having been taken on the ſeveral Articles diſtinctly) the Court Martial IS OF OPINION, that

the ſaid COLONEL HUGH DEBBIEG is GUILTY of each of the three Articles of Charge exhibited againſt him; and DOTH ADJUDGE, that he be SUSPENDED from Pay and Duty, as a Colonel of the Corps of Royal Engineers, for the Space of SIX CALENDAR MONTHS.

SOUTHAMPTON, LT. G.

THE

THE

DUKE OF RICHMOND's

OPENING OF THE CHARGES.

My Lord Southampton,

And Gentlemen *of the* Court Martial,

THE Offences of which I accuſe Colonel Debbieg in the Charges that His Majeſty has now referred to your Deciſion, are, in their Conſequences, of ſo high a Nature, and depending upon Facts ſo ſimple and ſo notorious, that I truſt I ſhall not have Occaſion to take up a great Deal of your Time, either in proving them, or inducing you to mark them with ſuch Puniſhment as they may be found to deſerve.

I am not conſcious of being actuated in this Buſineſs by a Diſpoſition to Severity, and ſtill leſs by any vindictive Spirit. I lament the Neceſſity I am under of ſtanding forth the Proſecutor of an Officer in one of the Corps I have the Honour to command. I feel hurt that an Engineer of Colonel Debbieg's long ſtanding ſhould ſo little know, or ſo little practice, one of the firſt Duties of a Soldier; and it will preſently be ſeen how unwilling I have been that ſuch Miſbehaviour ſhould be brought before the Public Eye. But ſituated as I have the Honour to be, at the Head of two Corps of the utmoſt Conſequence to the Public, conſiſting of upwards of three Hundred Officers, and four Thouſand Men, it will not appear an unimportant Part of my Duty, to keep up a due Subordination in them.

The Offences of which Colonel Debbieg is at preſent accuſed, are divided into three Charges.

Charges. The Firſt, is confined to the diſreſpectful Contents of the Letter in Queſtion, ſimply as addreſſed to me. The Second, relates to the evil Tendency of his making public thoſe diſreſpectful Contents. And the Third, is founded upon the Impropriety of an Officer who has been employed by Government to examine the Defences of the Country, publiſhing in a Newſpaper his Opinions on eſſential Parts thereof.

I have thought that this Diviſion of the Subject would tend to Perſpicuity, by preventing what may relate to one Charge, from being applied to another.

The firſt Charge conſiders the Letter merely as addreſſed to myſelf, and as ſuch, is highly offenſive in the Intention of Colonel Debbieg; but, as in the View of this

this Charge, it contains only his private Sentiments, I confeſs I had reconciled myſelf to the unfavourable Opinion he is pleaſed to expreſs of my Abilities, when compared to his own; and while I could prevent the bad Effects which the Example of ſuch a Conduct might produce, I own his Diſreſpect did not excite any great Reſentment in my Mind. The only Sentiment it gave riſe to was that of Compaſſion for the Infirmity of his unhappy Temper; and foreſeeing the unpleaſant Conſequences that muſt, as I conceived, enſue to him, if I proceeded againſt him, I had determined wholly to paſs over this Offence of Colonel Debbieg, which I could only do by taking no Notice whatever of his Letter.

But, when I ſaw this Letter printed in a Newſpaper, addreſſed to me, in my official Capacity, and ſubſcribed with Colonel Debbieg's Name at full Length, the Caſe

was

was altered; it was no longer a perſonal Buſineſs, to which, while it remained in my Poſſeſſion, I was at Liberty to ſhew what Indulgence I pleaſed. Colonel Debbieg had taken it out of my Hands, and appealed to the Public. It is not now to myſelf only, but to my Sovereign, to my Country, and to all Europe, that, after two Month's Reflection, Colonel Debbieg deliberately and publicly treats me with Diſreſpect; and imputes to me ſuch Ignorance, and Neglect of my Duty, as might, if not in the Intention, at leaſt in the Effect, prove as fatal to my Country as an Act of High Treaſon.

Theſe were my Motives for bringing Colonel Debbieg to a Court Martial.

But, although Colonel Debbieg would never have heard of this Proſecution if he had

had left his Letter, as it at firſt was, ſimply addreſſed to me; yet, when he thinks proper to publiſh it to the World, it becomes neceſſary for me to ſhew that it was my Lenity, not its Innocence, that had hitherto procured it Impunity.

It is for theſe Reaſons that the firſt Charge is founded on the Fact of writing to me the Letter of the 16th March, abſtracted from all Conſideration of the ſubſequent Offence, of publiſhing it, and of its Conſequences, which are reſerved for the other Charges.

On the Subject of this firſt Charge, which is, "For writing to me, his com-
"manding Officer, a Letter, dated the 16th
"of March, 1789, containing diſreſpectful
"Expreſſions towards me, and Imputations
"of Ignorance and Neglect of my Duty, as
"Maſter General of the Ordnance, to the
"Pre-

" Prejudice of good Order and military " Diſcipline ;" it is incumbent upon me to make out, that Colonel Debbieg's Letter of the 16th March, does contain the offenſive Matter I have charged it with; and, that an inferior Officer writing a Letter, ſo offenſive to his commanding Officer, although not made public, is a Breach of good Order and military Diſcipline.

To a military Tribunal, trying an Officer for a Breach of Diſcipline, I might appeal to the general Purport of the Letter in Queſtion, without pointing out particular Paſſages and their Tendency; and I am convinced, GENTLEMEN, that on theſe Grounds you would judge this Letter to be groſsly indecent, and unbecoming to a commanding Officer; but, having thought it right to be more ſpecific in my Charge, I ſhall beg your Attention to the ſeveral Parts of this extraordinary Addreſs.

It

It begins with ſtating a Variety of Circumſtances, none of which have the ſmalleſt Foundation in Fact; *viz.* "That I re-
"jected his Aſſiſtance at the Board of Sea
"and Land Officers; that I appointed that
"Board; that it was appointed under a
"Vote of the Houſe of Commons; and
"that Colonel Debbeig was expreſsly no-
"minated in that Honourable Houſe, and
"included in that Vote, to make one at that
"Board." I muſt ſuppoſe that when Colonel Debbieg made theſe Aſſertions he believed them to be well grounded; but I am much ſurprized that, as an Officer, he ſhould complain of his Superior, upon a Matter of ſuch public Notoriety, without giving himſelf the Trouble to enquire whether it had any Exiſtence. If Colonel Debbieg had made ſuch Enquiry, he would have found the Tranſaction he refers to, to have been totally different from his State of it.

The

The real Fact is, that, in the Ordnance Eſtimate, for the Year 1785, laid before the Houſe of Commons, there was a conſiderable Sum demanded for new Works, propoſed to be erected at Portſmouth and Plymouth. It is well known, that in the Debate that took Place thereupon, a Member ſuggeſted that, previous to the Houſe's adopting a new Meaſure of ſuch great Expence, it would be adviſable, that the particular Project, as well as the general Syſtem of Defence, for His Majeſty's Dock Yards, at Portſmouth and Plymouth, ſhould be inveſtigated by a Board of Sea and Land Officers. This Idea was thought reaſonable by Government; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed that the Demand for the Fortifications at Portſmouth and Plymouth ſhould be poſtponed for that Year, and that, in the mean Time, Application ſhould be made to His Majeſty for his Appointment of ſuch a Board. But as there was no Motion,

ſo

ſo there was no Vote whatever of the Houſe of Commons for this Appointment, which belonged, of Courſe, to His Majeſty; conſequently Colonel Debbieg could not be, as he ſays he was, included in any Vote for that Purpoſe.

With Reſpect to the Nomination of the Officers, it was, as I have already obſerved, in His Majeſty, not in me. I have heard that ſome of the Members did, in their Speeches, ſuggeſt the Names of Officers they wiſhed to ſee on this Board; and, it is poſſible that a Friend of Colonel Debbieg may have mentioned him; but, as His Majeſty was pleaſed to confine the Nomination of the Land Officers to ſuch as had the Rank of General Officer, Colonel Debbieg could not, of Courſe, be included in the King's Warrant; but, if the Caſe had been otherwiſe, I muſt think, with all poſſible Deference for Colonel Debbieg's Rank,

for his Services, and his Experience, all which, in the laſt Sentence of his Letter, he conceives fully entitle him to ſuch an Appointment; that no Officer has a Right to complain, if he happens not to be ſelected for a particular Service. I have adverted to this Paſſage of Colonel Debbieg's Letter, not as a Matter of Complaint againſt him, but merely to ſhew how apt he is to complain without Reaſon.

The next Paragraph of the Letter ſtates, That while my Mind was employed upon providing for ſo ſecondary an Object as the Security of the Dock Yards, ſimply as ſuch, his SOARED to thoſe ſame Objects, as connected and combined with thoſe of the Empire, the Proſperity of her Marine, and of her Commerce. Without attempting to *ſoar* with Colonel Debbieg, I confeſs my Mind is puzzled to find out the Senſe of this

Paragraph. The Security of the Dock Yards has, I apprehend, from the Time that this Nation has had a Navy, been conſidered as an Object of the firſt Importance; immenſe Sums of Money have been expended on them; and Colonel Debbieg did not formerly think his own Talents thrown away, in being, for many Years, employed on that Object. I do not therefore clearly ſee upon what Principle of Reaſoning this Security of the Dock Yards is now to be repreſented as not neceſſarily connected with the Proſperity of the Marine, and the Commerce of the Empire; and is to be reckoned, as being, in itſelf, a mere ſecondary Conſideration.

If the Object of the next Sentence is, that we ſhould at all Times be prepared againſt any Attempts from our Neighbours, I ſhall readily agree with Colonel Debbieg in that Poſition, although I may not quite think

think with him, that, from a comparative View of the State of this Nation, and that of its Neighbours, this is preciſely the Moment when we can be ſaid to be "imminently threatened with Miſchiefs, Impediments, and Difficulties, unfelt before."

I am now come to thoſe Paragraphs that begin to be inſulting: the firſt is, where Colonel Debbieg ſays, "In the Height of your Zeal for erecting military Works, like the Architect who built an elegant Town-Hall, and left no Room for a Staircaſe to aſcend to it, ſo your Grace, wiſhing to give extraordinary Attention to preſerve the Stores for equipping our Fleet, forgot that that Fleet ſtill wanted a fortified Harbour."

To have forgot ſo eſſential a Point as Colonel Debbieg ſeems to think this is, of procuring for the Fleet a fortified Harbour, would,

without Doubt, be a great Neglect of my Duty; and I ſhould have thought Colonel Debbieg only blamable if he had not apprized me of his Sentiments upon this Subject; but I muſt contend that he ſhould have done ſo with that Decency, Reſpect, and Submiſſion, that is due to his ſuperior Officer; and that it was by no Means neceſſary to any Purpoſe, but that of Inſult, to compare me to one of ſuch Ignorance as an Architect who could forget a Stair-caſe to get up to his Building.

I ſhall next go to the latter Part of the Paragraph, where he ſays, "Upon the Se-
"curity of which, (meaning a fortified Harbour) with the honeſt, indignant Feel-
"ings of an Engliſhman, it is with great
"Pain I muſt obſerve, your Grace hath
"not beſtowed due Reflection and Atten-
"tion, nor upon the fatal Conſequences
"that

" that would moſt ſurely reſult from the " Neglect of it."

Upon this Paragraph I ſhall firſt obſerve, that the Whole of it is couched more in Terms of Complaint and Reproach, than reſpectful Information: but when Colonel Debbieg chuſes to inform me that his Obſervations are accompanied with *indignant* Feelings, I muſt ſay that he loſes all Reſpect. The Word *indignant*, conveys a Sentiment of Anger and Diſdain, and I leave it to this Court to decide, whether ſuch an Expreſſion is proper to be uſed in ſuch a Correſpondence.

But not content with this, Colonel Debbieg proceeds in his Climax of Inſult, and next tells me, that my Syſtem appears, to him, " *only* calculated to invite the Enemy " into the very Boſom of Britain, where " he would ſoon neſtle himſelf, and be-

" fore we could have Time to look round " us, accompliſh the Overthrow of the " State."

This Paragraph, as I have before obſerved, although it ſays nothing, one Way or other, as to my Intentions, taxes me with a Syſtem, the Effects of which are ſtated to be as prejudicial as the moſt premeditated Act of High Treaſon. And here I muſt again beg of the Court to conſider more the Intention of Colonel Debbieg, in repreſenting my Syſtem as calculated *only* to accompliſh the Overthrow of the State, than the Reaſoning by which he would eſtabliſh ſuch a Conſequence; as whatever Grounds I have to complain of the Firſt, I have none in reſpect to the Latter, and ſhall not feel myſelf much of a Traitor, if I do give the Enemy that Invitation into the Country, which would ariſe from my having given Security to the Dock Yards.

The

The Remainder of Colonel Debbieg's Letter deſerves but little Notice. If, when he ſays, that it has been the Spirit of my Adminiſtration to puniſh him by the Laws of his Country, he means a Reproach, as by the general Context of his Letter I ſhould ſuppoſe he does, he ſhould learn how to expreſs his own Meaning; for however deteſtable a general Spirit to puniſh is,—a Spirit to puniſh by the Laws of our Country, is by no Means ſo.

As to his Requeſt, that becauſe he is pleaſed to inſult me, I ſhould call forth my Magnanimity, and let a Board of Sea and Land Officers ſit and report upon his general Principles, in order that he may have an Opportunity of ſhewing what Sort of a Man he is; I can only ſay, that this appears to me to be perfectly unneceſſary, and that if Colonel Debbieg's honeſt Endeavours to ſerve the State are fruſtrated, it is

ſolely to himſelf, not to me, that he owes it.

I truſt I have now ſufficiently pointed out the particular Expreſſions, which, as well as the general Purport of the Letter, are Diſreſpectful, and that impute to me Ignorance and Neglect of my Duty, as Maſter General of the Ordnance. The next Thing for me is to ſhew, that the Writing of ſuch a Letter is to the Prejudice of good Order and military Diſcipline.

Abuſive Language and inſulting Reflections, if they are not below all Notice, muſt ſow the Seeds of Diſcord; in either Caſe, they are prejudicial to a military Profeſſion, where it is equally neceſſary that both the ſuperior and inferior Officer ſhould be reſpected, and that no private Animoſities ſhould induce the impoſing unreaſonable

Commands,

Commands, or impede the chearful Compliance with reaſonable ones.

Nor are ſuch Methods in any reſpect neceſſary for the Attainment of Juſtice.—If Colonel Debbieg thinks himſelf wronged, he has a Right to complain to me, or of me to the King. If he has any Crime to charge me with, either againſt himſelf or the Public, he may apply for a Court Martial to try me; and when he ſtands forth as an Accuſer, it will not be denied him.—If he conceives my Plans for the Defence of the Country, to be weak and ignorant, becauſe they do not coincide with his, he may make Repreſentations thereupon to His Majeſty; or if he thinks them dangerous to the Public, he may communicate them to a Member of either Houſe of Parliament, and endeavour to make them the Subject of Parliamentary Enquiry; but in any of theſe Proceedings, he muſt confine himſelf

himſelf to decent Repreſentation; he cannot indulge himſelf in opprobrious Invective, without being guilty of a groſs Breach of military Diſcipline.

What Juſtification or Excuſes Colonel Debbieg may attempt to offer for ſuch a Conduct, is more than I can pretend to gueſs; and this Conduct of his is the more extraordinary, as for ſeveral Years paſt, I have never ſeen Colonel Debbieg but by Accident, or had any Correſpondence or Communication with him of any Kind, until he left this Letter of the 16th of March laſt, at my Houſe; ſo that this Behaviour of his, has been totally unprovoked by me.

Upon theſe Grounds, and the Proof of the Letter being of Colonel Debbieg's Writing, which, I dare ſay, he will readily admit,—I reſt my firſt Charge.

THE

THE SECOND CHARGE is, " For " having cauſed to be publiſhed a Letter, " purporting to be a Copy of a Letter " addreſſed to His Grace the Duke of Rich- " mond, &c. Maſter General of His Ma- " jeſty's Ordnance, dated Mortimer-ſtreet, " the 16th of March, 1789, and ſigned " Hugh Debbieg, which has a manifeſt " Tendency to diſcredit him, his com- " manding Officer, and imputes to him " *a Syſtem only calculated to invite the Enemy* " *into the very Boſom of Britain, where he* " *would ſoon neſtle himſelf, and before we* " *could have Time to look round us, accom-* " *pliſh the Overthrow of the State*; to the " Prejudice of good Order and military " Diſcipline."

The Firſt I ſaw of this Publication was in the Public Advertiſer, of Thurſday, the 4th of June; upon which, before I would make any Application to the Printer, I thought

thought it the moſt open and fair Way to write directly to Colonel Debbieg, and accordingly I ſent him the following Letter;

"WHITEHALL, 4*th June*, 1789.

"SIR,

"HAVING ſeen in the "Public Advertiſer of this Day, a Copy "of a Letter addreſſed to me, as Maſter "General of His Majeſty's Ordnance, "with your Signature; I deſire to know "whether its Publication has been by your "Directions, or with your Conſent or "Knowledge.

"I am, SIR,

"Your moſt obedient,

"Humble Servant,

"RICHMOND, *&c.*,

"MASTER GENERAL OF HIS "MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE."

"*Colonel Debbieg.*"

To

To this Letter I received the following Anſwer.

" MORTIMER-STREET, *4th June*, 1789.

" MY LORD DUKE,

" IN return to the Honour " of your Grace's Letter, received almoſt " this Moment, I have only to aſſure your " Grace, that no Letter of mine, to you, " was inſerted by my Directions, or with " my Conſent or Knowledge, in the Public " Advertiſer of this Day.

" I have the honour to be, with great Reſpect,

" MY LORD DUKE,

" Your Grace's moſt obedient,

" And moſt humble Servant,

" HUGH DEBBIEG."

" *To His Grace the Duke of Richmond,*
" *Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance.*"

As

As the Steps I took, in Conſequence of this Letter from Colonel Debbieg, are mentioned in a Letter I wrote to him on the 6th of June, it will be ſufficient to ſtate that Letter, which was as follows:

"WHITEHALL, 6*th June*, 1789.

"SIR,

"AS your Letter of "the 4th Inſtant, informed me that no "Letter of your's, to me, was inſerted "by your Directions, or with your Con-"ſent or Knowledge, in the Public Ad-"vertiſer of that Day, I ſent to the Prin-"ter of the Public Advertiſer, to know "from whom he had received the Letter "he had publiſhed, and found he had only "copied it from the Gazetteer of the pre-"ceding Day. Upon ſending to the Per-"ſon who has the Management of that

"Paper,

" Paper, I underſtand, he received the
" Letter in Manuſcript, from Mr. De-
" brett.

" As my Requeſt to you, concerning
" your Letter, was in general Terms,
" with Reſpect to its Publication, I am per-
" ſuaded that your Anſwer meant to con-
" vey, generally, that you was not in any
" Way, privy to it. However, to prevent
" Miſtakes, I wiſh to be informed whether
" I am, or am not right in this Perſuaſion;
" as from the preciſe wording of your An-
" ſwer to me, it might be conſidered as
" confining your Knowledge of the Pub-
" lication of your Letter, of the 16th of
" March laſt, to the particular Paper of
" the Public Advertiſer, of the 4th of
" June, in which I had ſeen it; and I am
" further to deſire, you will inform me
" whether you have given any Copy of

" the Letter, which has been publiſhed,
" to Mr. Debrett, or have any Knowledge
" by what Means it came into his Hands.

" I am, SIR,

" Your moſt obedient,

" Humble Servant,

" RICHMOND, *&c.*

" MASTER GENERAL OF HIS
" MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE."

" *Colonel Debbieg.*"

To this Letter I received the following Anſwer:

" MORTIMER-STREET, 6th *June*, 1789.

" MY LORD DUKE,

" IN Anſwer to your Grace's
" Letter of this Day's Date, I have only to
" expreſs my Surprize that you ſhould call
" upon me for any further Explanation
" reſpecting

" reſpecting the Publication of a Letter,
" dated the 16th *March* laſt, of which you
" have never condeſcended to acknowledge
" the Receipt.

" I have the Honour of being,

" My Lord Duke,

" Your Grace's moſt obedient,

" Humble Servant,

" HUGH DEBBIEG."

" *To His Grace the Duke of Richmond,*
" *Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance.*"

I confeſs this Letter ſurpriſed me a good deal, and began to ſhake the Confidence Colonel Debbieg's Letter of the 4th, had given me, that he had no Share in the Publication; but upon deſiring a Gentleman to call upon Mr. Debrett, and being informed by him, that Mr. Debrett had avowed to

him that he had received the Letter from Colonel Debbieg himſelf, with a Deſire that he ſhould print it, which he had accordingly done in the Gazetteer, of which he is a Proprietor: I was, and ſtill am, perfectly at a loſs to conceive, how Colonel Debbieg could take the Trouble of denying ſo pointedly, any Knowledge of the Publication in one Paper, when he was conſcious of his having himſelf, directed the Publication in another.

It was certainly my Fault in not obſerving that Colonel Debbieg's preciſe Words, were no Anſwer to my general Queſtion, and I own I was completely miſled by them.

I have deſired that Mr. Debrett, may be ſummoned to attend as a Witneſs, and I have no Doubt, but that he will confirm,

upon

upon Oath, what he told the Gentleman I ſent to him, namely, that he had the Letter from Colonel Debbieg himſelf, and publiſhed it by his Deſire.

Mr. James Perrie, the Editor of the Gazetteer, is alſo ſummoned, and will, I dare ſay, produce the Manuſcript Copy, which he informed the Gentleman I ſent to him, that he had got and would keep, and that he will prove the receiving it from Mr. Debrett. On this Evidence I reſt the firſt Part of my ſecond Charge; *viz.* "that "Colonel Debbieg cauſed to be publiſhed "a Letter, purporting to be a Copy of a "Letter, addreſſed to His Grace the Duke "of Richmond, Maſter General of His "Majeſty's Ordnance, dated Mortimer-"ſtreet, the 16th of March, 1789; and "ſigned Hugh Debbieg." I have ſo deſcribed it, only as *purporting* to be a Copy of his Letter to me, becauſe, on comparing

the printed Copy with the Original, I find there are many trifling Variations, and although they do not alter the Senſe of the Letter, I could not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, call it a Copy of his Letter to me. The Variations are :

In the 11th Line of the Print, the Word *long* is inſerted.
12th . . . . . *that* is inſerted inſtead of *when*.
15th . . . . . *the* inſtead of *thoſe*.
24th . . . . . *forgot* inſtead of *left no room for*.
25th . . . . . *ſo* is left out.
27th . . . . . *ſtill* is left out.
48th . . . . . 20*th* inſtead of 10*th*.
51ſt . . . . . *own* is left out.
61ſt . . . . . *a* is inſerted.
62d . . . . . *ſo* is left out.
73d . . . . . *open* is left out.
74th . . . . . *fully* is inſerted.

Beſides theſe, the Word SOARED, in the Original, is written in diſtinguiſhed large Characters, and the Paſſages marked in Italics in the Print, were not ſo in the Original.

It

It is unneceſſary for me, on this Second Charge, to repeat any of the Obſervations I have made on the ſeveral Parts of this Letter under the Firſt Charge; it will be ſufficient for me to remark, that every one of them apply, with tenfold Force, to the Publication. For if you, Gentlemen, have been ſatisfied that the Expreſſions contained in Colonel Debbieg's Letter, of the 16th March, were highly unbecoming to be written to a commanding Officer, how much more will you think them blamable when publiſhed to the World. It is from the Publication of thoſe Expreſſions that I infer that the Letter has a manifeſt Tendency to diſcredit me, his commanding Officer; which, with the Paſſage quoted, are, I contend, highly to the Prejudice of good Order and military Diſcipline. I truſt, Gentlemen, that if you ſhould think with me, that, great as the firſt Offence was in itſelf, I might paſs it over, while the Let-

ter was confined to my Poſſeſſion, you will alſo agree with me, in thinking that I could not, conſiſtently with my Duty, forbear to take Notice of that Offence, when it was repeated, after two Months Reflection, and infinitely aggravated by the Publication.

THE THIRD CHARGE is, "For that "he, the ſaid Colonel Debbieg, having "been employed by Government in exa- "mining the Defences of the Kingdom, "has made public his Opinions on eſſential "Parts thereof, by the ſaid Publication, "contrary to his Duty as an Officer, and "to the Prejudice of good Order and mi- "litary Diſcipline." When Colonel Debbieg had, by the Publication of his Letter, compelled me to proceed againſt him before a Court Martial, and that that Letter contained a Publication of his Opinion on eſſential Parts of the Defences of the King-

dom,

dom, ſigned with his name, I thought that, conſiſtently with my Duty, I could not avoid taking Notice of ſo irregular a Proceeding; but I do not lay any Streſs upon this Offence, becauſe I do not mean to accuſe Colonel Debbieg of any bad Intention towards this Country in the ſtrong Alluſions he has made in that Publication, to what he conceives to be weak Parts in the Defences of the Kingdom. I am perſuaded that it was only his extreme Zeal for bringing his own Ideas into Notice, that induced him to take this Step.

However, I thought it right to ſtate the Cirumſtance of Colonel Debbieg's publiſhing his Opinions as a Breach of his Duty as an Officer; and I have put it in a ſeparate Charge, that the Court may be enabled ſeparately to conſider this Offence, and to determine the Degree of Animadverſion they may think this Part of Colonel Debbieg's Conduct may deſerve.

The Fact of Publication, under this third Charge, reſts upon the ſame Ground as it does under the ſecond Charge.

The Fact of Colonel Debbieg's having been employed by Government in examining the Defences of the Kingdom, is ſtated by himſelf in that Paragraph of his Letter, where he ſays, "I had formed (having "Authority to do ſo) Opinions upon the "Subject of the Defences of the Country." Colonel Debbieg will readily admit this; but, if neceſſary, it can eaſily be otherwiſe proved.

I ſhall conclude with one Remark on the Subject of the ſecond Charge, which I am perſuaded every Member of this Court will feel the Truth of, which is, that if that Licentiouſneſs of the Preſs, which is already ſuch a Nuiſance to domeſtic Happineſs, is ſuffered to extend itſelf to

Differences

Differences between military Gentlemen, on Points of Diſcipline and public Duty, it muſt ſoon put an End to that Syſtem of good Order and due Subordination, without which an Army would indeed become dangerous to the State.

It is high Time that ſome effectual Check ſhould be put to this unbecoming Way of Officers attacking their Superiors in Newſpapers; and I am convinced that, as in civil Society, ſtopping the Abuſes of the Preſs is the beſt Means of preſerving its real Liberty; ſo in an Army like ours, remarkable for the Decency that is obſerved in Command, the repreſſing Intemperance and eſſential Breaches of Duty, is the beſt Means of preſerving to it that reſpectable Character, to which the Britiſh Service is ſo eminently entitled, and, indeed of continuing it a liberal Profeſſion.

THE

THE

DUKE OF RICHMOND's

REPLY,

TO

COLONEL DEBBIEG's DEFENCE.

My Lord, and Gentlemen,

COLONEL DEBBIEG has ſtated that I have in a Manner abandoned the laſt Charge. I wiſh he had had a Copy of my opening, which would have prevented ſuch a Miſtake:—I by no Means abandoned that Charge; I conſidered it then, as I ſtill do, and as I think, you Gentlemen muſt conſider it, a Breach of his Duty as an Officer: all I acquitted him of was, *any bad Intention towards*

towards his Country in the ſtrong Alluſions he has made in that Publication, to what he conceives to be the weak Part in the Defences of the Kingdom;—Theſe were my Words.

Colonel Debbieg ſays, his Alluſions were made in general Terms, and could give an Enemy no Information; but that they did convey Information to me, and to thoſe who have made theſe Matters their particular Study. I certainly was at no loſs to underſtand Colonel Debbieg; and when he mentions the Want of a Fortified Harbour, I conceive every body here and elſewhere, muſt equally underſtand him. I do therefore, beg Leave to repeat it, that I do not abandon the third Charge; I maintain it to be a Breach of his Duty, as an Officer, and a very bad Example. I only do not impute to him to have been guilty of this Offence from any bad Intentions to the Public.

Colonel

Colonel Debbieg, in the next Place, has thrown out that he has had Juniors put over his Head, and ſays he is a diſappointed Man. I wiſh he had mentioned in what Inſtances he has had Juniors put over his Head; I know of none. As to his Diſappointments, if he means my not employing him; I muſt ſay, that that has been entirely his own Fault; and I muſt contend that no Officer has a Right to conſider himſelf as ill-uſed, if, for any Reaſon, or without any Reaſon given, his Superior does not think fit to employ him.

Colonel Debbieg, in Anſwer to the firſt Charge, ſays, that as to the Fact of writing to me the Letter in Queſtion, he need ſay Nothing; and treats it as a Matter of Courſe, that ſuch a Letter might be written. If he had confined this Remark to the *Subject* of that Letter, I ſhould have agreed with him; but it is not to the *Subject*, it

is

is to the *Manner* and *Style* that I object; it is *theſe* I have commented upon, and to which Colonel Debbieg has given no Anſwer whatever; I therefore truſt, that without repeating my Obſervations, they will remain in your Minds, and that you will conſider that Letter *as containing diſrepectful Expreſſions towards me, and Imputations of Ignorance, and Neglect of my Duty, as Maſter General of the Ordnance, to the Prejudice of good Order and military Diſcipline.*

But Colonel Debbieg becauſe he is not immediately employed on any Work, ſeems to think that there is a Diſtinction to be made in the Sort of Obedience he is under, and the Reſpect that is due from him to his commanding Officer: he ſays, *his Actions are like thoſe of any other Citizen*; ſo that, to compare his Situation with that of the Line, if he is not actually upon Guard, or on Duty, his Actions are to be governed, in his

Reſpect to his commanding Officer, by no other Rules than thoſe which govern other Citizens.

Colonel Debbieg next ſtates, that he has been uſed to be called upon by Miniſters, for his Opinions, without the Knowledge of the Maſters General. If ſuch has been the Caſe, it may have been juſtified by the Commands he received from His Majeſty's Miniſters; but, in this Inſtance, Colonel Debbieg has not waited to be conſulted, or to be ordered to give his Opinion; he has turned out a Volunteer, and endeavoured to force his Plan upon the Miniſter; who, very properly returned him no Anſwer; and, when he deſired Leave to lay his Plan before the King, he tells you the Miniſter alſo gave him no Anſwer. But, would you believe it, Gentlemen! this Plan, which Colonel Debbieg is now ſo anxious to have adopted, he has never taken the

regular

regular Means to have examined; he has never communicated it to the Maſter General, or Board of Ordnance, or to the Engineer in Chief; which would have been the regular Channels: He muſt not, therefore accuſe me of not having adopted what I have never ſeen. However, from ſome very general Notions of it, which he gave to Mr. Pitt, very lately communicated to me, I ſuſpect the true Reaſon of Colonel Debbieg's not having taken the regular Steps of laying this Plan before his Superiors in the Ordnance, is, that he is ſenſible that it would not ſtand the Teſt of an Examination before thoſe of his own Profeſſion.

As to the ſecond Charge, of publiſhing in a Newſpaper, his Letter to me; Colonel Debbieg has juſtified this Proceeding, by ſaying he was urged to it, by his Anxiety for having his Plan adopted, when all other Means had proved fruitleſs; but, to make this

this Excuſe, ſuch as it is, of any Avail; he ſhould have ſhewn that he had before taken the regular Steps to have his Plan adopted, and I have ſhewn that he had not done any ſuch Thing; and, if he had, I cannot conſider it becoming an Officer, becauſe he is diſappointed in having what he conceives beneficial to the Country adopted, to be making an Appeal to the Public in a Newſpaper againſt his commanding Officer.

GENERAL ORDERS.

AT A GENERAL COURT MARTIAL, held at the HORSE GUARDS, on *Friday*, the 26th; and continued by Adjournment, on *Monday* the 29th *June*, 1789.

CHARGES exhibited by CHARLES, DUKE OF RICHMOND, &c. MASTER GENERAL of HIS MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE, againſt HUGH DEBBIEG, ESQ. one of the COLONELS in the CORPS of ROYAL ENGINEERS.

FIRST. For writing to him, his commanding Officer, a Letter dated the 16th of March, 1789; containing diſreſpectful Expreſſions towards him,

and Imputations of Ignorance, and Neglect of his Duty, as Maſter General of the Ordnance, to the Prejudice of good Order and military Diſcipline.

SECONDLY. For having cauſed to be publiſhed a Letter, purporting to be a Copy of a Letter addreſſed to His Grace the Duke of Richmond, Maſter General of His Majeſty's Ordnance, dated Mortimer-ſtreet, the 16th March, 1789, and ſigned Hugh Debbieg, which has a manifeſt Tendency to diſcredit him, his commanding Officer; and imputes to him a Syſtem, "only calculated to in-
"vite the Enemy into the very Boſom
"of Britain, where he would ſoon neſ-
"tle himſelf; and, before we could
"have Time to look round us, ac-
"compliſh the Overthrow of the
"State;"

" State;" to the Prejudice of good Order and military Diſcipline.

THIRDLY. For that he, the ſaid Colonel Debbieg, having been employed by Government in examining the Defences of the Kingdom, has made public his Opinions on eſſential Parts thereof, by the ſaid Publication, contrary to his Duty as an Officer, and to the Prejudice of good Order and military Diſcipline.

SENTENCE.

SENTENCE.

UPON due Conſideration of the whole Matter, (the Senſe of each Member having been taken upon the ſeveral Articles diſtinctly) the Court Martial is of Opinion, that the ſaid Colonel Hugh Debbieg is Guilty of each of the three Articles of Charge exhibited againſt him, and doth adjudge that he be ſuſpended from Pay and Duty, as a Colonel of the Corps of Royal Engineers, for the Space of Six Calendar Months.

HIS MAJESTY, after expreſſing his Concern that an Officer of Colonel Debbieg's Rank and Experience

perience ſhould, a ſecond Time, have loſt Sight of Diſcipline and Subordination, adverted to the Lenity of the Sentence; which, His Majeſty was pleaſed graciouſly to attribute to the Opinion entertained by the Court Martial of Colonel Debbieg's former Services and profeſſional Merit. His Majeſty wiſhed, upon the ſame Ground, to have found an Opening for the Interpoſition of His Royal Clemency; but in Support of good Order, and for enforcing an Obſervance of that Deference and Reſpect, which Officers of inferior Degree owe, at all Times, to thoſe which are ſuperior to them in Rank and Command, His Majeſty has thought it

it neceſſary to confirm the Sentence of the Court Martial, and to direct that the ſame, together with His Majeſty's Confirmation thereof, be notified in Public Orders.

FINIS.

Ex. J. M.
6/3/12

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